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BOREN SAYS GATES HEARINGS WILL NOT 'RETRY' SCANDAL
BY JUDI HASSON
WASHINGTON

The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Tuesday the panel will explore how to protect the CIA from misuse during its confirmation hearing of Robert Gates as chief of the spy agency.

"We're going to be very thorough in these hearings," said committee chairman Sen. David Boren, D-Okla. "There may be some questions about the agency's role and whether there will be protections in the future to make sure the agency isn't misused."

Monday, President Reagan nominated Gates, a career CIA officer, to replace the ailing William Casey, who is recovering from a cancerous brain tumor.

The CIA's involvement in the Iran arms-Contra aid scandal has come under scrutiny as well as Casey's role in the secret sale of U.S. arms to Iran and the subsequent diversion of sales profits to the Nicaraguan Contras.

But Boren said Gates' confirmation hearings, scheduled to start Feb. 17, will not be used as a forum to talk about the worst scandal of the Reagan presidency. He said the intelligence committee would not usurp the role of the Senate select committee set up to investigate the scandal.

"We'll confine ourselves to Mr. Gates, his personal role, his role in reporting information to the committee and his attitude toward running the agency in the future. We will not retry the entire Iranian arms episode," Boren said.

However, Boren said the committee would probe how the agency can be protected in the future against misuse.

The Senate Intelligence Committee issued an exhaustive 65-page report last week that disclosed, among other things, that CIA services were used in ferrying arms to Iran, but top CIA officials were not informed about it at the beginning.

"The agency was trying its best to live by the rules but to some extent, it was misled initially," Boren said.